

What is claimed is:

- 5           1. An absorbent product comprising cellulosic fibers reacted with an effective amount of a crosslinking agent in the presence of an effective amount of a C<sub>4</sub> – C<sub>12</sub> polyol wherein the individualized intrafiber crosslinked cellulosic fibers are characterized by a Whiteness Index, (WI<sub>CDM-L</sub>), greater than about 69.0.
2. The product of Claim 1 wherein the individualized intrafiber crosslinked  
10           cellulosic fibers have an *L* value greater than about 94.5.
3. The product of Claim 1 wherein the intrafiber crosslinked cellulosic fibers have an *a* value greater than about -1.55 and less than about -0.60.
4. The product of Claim 1 wherein the intrafiber crosslinked cellulosic fibers have a *b* value less than about 8.5.
- 15           5. The product of Claim 1 wherein the crosslinking agent is an  $\alpha$ -hydroxy polycarboxylic acid.
6. The product of Claim 5 wherein the crosslinking agent is selected from the group consisting of malic acid, tartaric acid, citric acid, tartronic acid,  $\alpha$ -hydroxyglutaric acid, and citramalic acid and mixtures thereof.
- 20           7. The product of Claim 6 wherein the crosslinking agent is malic acid.
8. The product of Claim 6 wherein the crosslinking agent is citric acid.
9. The absorbent product of Claim 1 wherein the polyol is selected from the group consisting of acyclic polyols, alicyclic polyols, and heterosides and mixtures thereof.
- 25           10. The product of Claim 9 wherein the acyclic polyol is sorbitol.

11. The product of Claim 9 wherein the alicyclic polyol is myo-inositol.
12. The product of Claim 9 wherein the heteroside is maltitol.
13. The product of Claim 9 wherein the heteroside is lactitol.
14. The product of Claim 1 wherein the intrafiber crosslinked cellulosic fibers have a  
5        brightness greater than about 79.0 % ISO brightness.
15. The product of Claim 1 further comprising fluff pulp fibers.
16. The product of Claim 1 further comprising superabsorbent material.
17. The product of Claim 1 wherein the product is an infant diaper.
18. The product of Claim 1 wherein the product is an adult incontinence product.
- 10    19. The product of Claim 1 wherein the product is a feminine hygiene product.
20. The product of Claim 1 wherein the product is at least one of a tissue or towel.